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ABSTRACT

Extensive abstracts of papers presented at two poster sessions of a conference on learning disabilities (LD) are included. The first session of the conference focused on research on assessment and characteristics of students with learning disabilities. Individual papers covered the following topics: longitudinal case studies of college students with LD; word-finding difficulties and cognition; attributional style and academic success; behavior adjustment in LD students; LD among abused males in residential treatment facilities; training social services employees about attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD); faculty perceptions of support services; language therapy for adolescents; quality of life as viewed by female college students with LD; negotiation skills in LD children; LD and underachievement; and self-advocacy skills of college students. The second session presented papers concerned with research on instruction and treatment. Topics included: group therapy for LD adolescents; a developmental writing program at Southern Illinois University; attitudes toward inclusion of teachers and parents; preparation of special education leadership personnel; facilitating inclusion through home, community, and school collaboration; reinforcing phonics skills through a tutorial program; improving reading fluency; professional development schools at Chicago State University (Illinois); research on homework and LD students; a multisensory approach to teaching mathematics; and a program to improve writing of LD students. (DB)

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"Renewing the Commitment: 1963-1997"

Learning Disabilities Association of America

International Conference
Chicago, Illinois
February 19-22, 1997

POSTER SESSION ABSTRACTS

compiled by

Steven C. Russell, Ph.D.

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This portion of the yearly LDA conference, the Research Poster Sessions, has become anticipated eagerly by conference attendees interested in the most recent research related to individuals with learning disabilities. This format allows for the exchange of information through both formal (availability of abstracts and display of posters) and informal (discussion with the presenter[s]) means.

This year we continue another means of sharing the results of research. At the request of previous research poster presenters, and conference attendees, submitted abstracts have been compiled in the following booklet. I am happy to report that this is the second volume that includes an abstract from each research poster session scheduled for the conference.

Thanks to all who took this opportunity to share their abstracts. We've continued a new "standard" set by the 1996 Dallas conference.

S. C. R.
1997

Learning Disabilities Association
of America
International Conference
Chicago, Illinois
February 19-22, 1997

Research Poster Session Abstracts
Volume 6
compiled by Steven C. Russell

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Comprehensive Service Delivery to College Students with Learning Disabilities: Longitudinal Case Studies of Student Characteristics, Interventions, and Outcomes

According to Merrell (1990), learning disabilities is the largest and fastest growing special education service category. The causes are many and varied but the result is that as parents and students become more aware of the advances in the field, access to opportunities continues to increase. Thus, the number of students with learning disabilities applying to college also increases. There are many challenges related to the growth in numbers of students with learning disabilities applying to colleges and the development and implementation of policies and delivery of services.

Under mounting pressure, colleges and universities across the country hasten to comply with legal mandates and to meet the growing demand for services in the midst of concerns about program costs, how "reasonable" accommodations are defined and whether or not standards of academic excellence are compromised (Woods, Sedlacek, & Boyer, 1990), "underpreparedness" of LD students entering college (Vogel, 1987), and shortages of competent professionals to serve students with learning disabilities at the postsecondary level (Norlander, Shaw, & McGuire, 1990). In most cases, service delivery genuinely attempts to meet the needs of the student, but because resources are strained, services are often "not grounded in theory or supported by any efficacy or evaluation data" (McGuire, Norlander, & Shaw, 1990, p. 71). McGuire et.al. go on to say that little systematic research has been done to determine the effectiveness of services provided or report on student outcomes.

The research that has been conducted encompasses a broad range of research methodologies and theoretical underpinnings and examines self-perceptions, subtype groupings, motivational orientations, classroom adjustments, academic needs, parent perceptions, grade point averages, and employment issues. Difficulties inherent within an evolving field of study can result in divisiveness among theorists and practitioners. Different diagnostic standards and differences in identification practices for the purpose of service eligibility present further challenge to the researcher. Implementation of accommodations takes the form of a "one size fits all" approach in response to differences in diagnostic and identification standards.

While some students may benefit from a generic approach to service delivery, many colleges offer services beyond basic accommodation. Many such collegiate programs, in an effort to improve, benefit from the emerging studies. Studies considering the effectiveness of these interventions to examine which types of services are provided, how "service packages" are prescribed, and what outcomes are realized can contribute to informed decision making. Longitudinal studies can provide interventions, and outcomes, including transition information following the postsecondary experience (McGuire et.al., 1990).

Merrill (1990) points out that previous investigators have typically studied characteristics of the learning disabled population in isolation, rarely focusing on how the dynamic relationship among the complex variables comprising each unique individual interrelate. Definition alone tells us that the term "learning disability" includes a heterogeneous range of functioning. However, because of the intrinsic nature of the condition and the extrinsic nature of the manifestation of the condition within the unique constellation of individual characteristics, a complete theory of learning disabilities cannot be derived from a single paradigm. Instead, only theory encompassing neuropsychological, behavioral, psychosocial, developmental, and cognitive explanations provides a framework from which relevant intervention strategies may be implemented. Previous research has not detailed the complex diversity of individual students or revealed customized strategies sensitive to the individual learner and the completion of specific tasks. This study provides a longitudinal, in-depth look at college students with learning disabilities and takes into consideration the constellation of defining characteristics and how those characteristics dictate choice of intervention strategies. Outcome, defined as grade point average, graduation rate and date, and career or advanced study decision, is also tracked.

The purpose of this study is to examine comprehensive service delivery to college students with learning disabilities at the University of Denver's Learning Effectiveness Program. The study also seeks to explore, by a longitudinal, multiple-case study approach, student characteristics, accommodations, and outcomes to provide data for the development of theory, and to contribute to the understanding of service delivery at the postsecondary level. This study considers student characteristics such as learning style, self-concept, cognitive/developmental stage, emotional quotient, parent support and explores how these characteristics influence the implementation of academic accommodation, performance, and career choice.

A case study approach is utilized to search for patterns by comparing student data with findings or trends discussed in the literature; to discover links or explanations regarding student characteristics, accommodations, and outcomes; and to analyze changes in patterns over time (Creswell, 1994). The study began during the fall of 1994 with Group I, consisting of eight freshmen. Group II, consisting of ten freshmen, began in the fall of 1996. All 1994 and 1996 freshmen in the Learning Effectiveness Program were invited to participate. Data is gathered by review of psychoeducational evaluations, audiotaped student interviews, audiotaped counselor interviews, college G.P.A., completion of the Learning and Study Strategies Inventory (Weinstein, 1987), and completion of the Self-Perception Profile for College Students (Neemann and Harter, 1986). Data is analyzed and coded on an on-going basis to identify themes, trends, and categories. Taped interviews are transcribed verbatim. Internal validity is assured through triangulation of data, member checking, long term and repeated observation, and clarification of researcher bias (Creswell, 1994). External reliability occurs through the detailed description of all aspects of the study and the use of multiple methods of data collection and analysis.

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The Effect of Word-Finding Difficulties on Students' Cognitive Assessments

Professionals believe that students' language and learning challenges frequently complicate interpretation of their intelligence test scores. One specific language difficulty that has the potential to effect students' cognitive test performance is word finding. This investigation examined the influence of students' word-finding difficulties on their test performance on the WISC-R. Eighty-one fourth- and fifth-grade students with learning disabilities with WISC-R subscale scores on file were administered the Test of Word Finding (TWF) (German, 1989). Classification of the LD sample by word-finding skills formed the bases for group comparisons. Initial analysis of variance using composite IQs as the unit of analysis indicated that students with word-finding difficulties earned significantly lower mean WISC-R Verbal IQs than did students without word-finding difficulties, while mean differences in the Performance Scale IQs did not differ significantly. An initial multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), treating the ten WISC-R subtests as the dependent variable set, was also statistically significant ($p < .05$). Univariate F-tests and eta-squared values were used as post hoc indicators of variable importance to differentiate between students with and without word-finding difficulties in the LD population. Significant differences in word finding group means emerged on the Information, Similarities ("large" effect range) and Comprehension Subtests ("medium" effect range). Neither Vocabulary, Arithmetic nor Performance subscale mean differences were statistically significant.

Typically, students who obtain lower scores on the Vocabulary, Similarities, and Comprehension subtests of the WISC-R have been judged to have weaker verbal conceptual (Bannatyne, 1968, 1974) or verbal comprehension (Wechsler, 1991) abilities. But it appears that in

this investigation a "conceptual deficit hypothesis" may not be appropriate for explaining why students with word-finding difficulties earned lower scores on these Verbal Scale subtests. First, these students' scale scores were not significantly different on the Arithmetic and Vocabulary subtests. Since both these subtests require comprehension and manipulation of verbal stimuli, it is questionable whether the students with word-finding difficulties are really weaker in verbal conceptual and/or comprehension skills. Further similar performance on the nonverbal components of the WISC-R suggest adequate metalinguistic thought processes and reasoning abilities (Hearne & Stone, 1995). Thus, it appears that these two groups of students did not differ significantly in their global cognitive ability. Consequently an alternate hypothesis is needed to explain why these students with word-finding difficulties manifested weaker performance on the Information, Similarities, and Comprehension subtests. It may be that weaker retrieval skills contributed to their poorer performance on these three verbal subtests. If so a "retrieval deficit hypothesis" rather than a "conceptual deficit hypothesis" may be a better explanation for the Verbal subtest score differences observed in this investigation. The significance of these findings as they relate to test guidelines indicated in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) will be discussed. An adapted assessment model for students with word-finding difficulties will be recommended.

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Attributional Style as a Predictor of Academic Success for Students with Learning Disabilities and/or Attention Deficit Disorder in Postsecondary Education

Sixty-six thousand students with learning disabilities (LD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are graduating from high school each year, with half of these students pursuing postsecondary education (Tenth Annual Report to Congress on the Implementation of the Education of the Handicapped Act, 1991). Students with LD and/or ADHD are the fastest growing category of students with disabilities attending colleges and universities. Of these students, 60% attend two year colleges and 40% attend four year universities (Henderson, 1992). Since 1985, the percentage of first year self-identified college students with LD and ADHD, has increased to 25% of the total population of students with disabilities registered on college campuses (Henderson, 1992). Jarrow (1991) believed this may be an underestimation of the actual number; she estimated that students who have self-identified with LD and/or ADHD account for as much as 35% to 50% of the postsecondary disability population.

Many students with LD and/or ADHD experience academic difficulty at the postsecondary level for a variety of reasons. Students with LD experience myriad academic deficiencies ranging from problems in information acquisition (including problems in reading and acquiring verbal information), information processing (including difficulties with math calculation and information organization), and information presentation (including difficulties with written expression and information articulation). For students with ADHD, academic difficulties are manifested by an inability to stay on task, sustain concentration during lecture or study, organize time and materials, and perform on nonstructured evaluations and testing (Nadeau, 1995). These difficulties may have a devastating affect on academic performance. Students with disabilities in direct conflict with the academic process may experience more than their fair share of academic failure. The attributional style for academic failure may determine which students will continue to put forth effort and which students will give up. This study will apply the reformulated learned helplessness theory to academic functioning of students with LD and ADHD by comparing the attributional style scores with academic success and behavioral persistence in the face of academic failure.

Most people encounter stressful events that can have a major impact on the course and direction of their lives. How persons cognitively formulate explanations for negative events may color their attributional style for future encounters. Learned helplessness is the giving up reaction, the quitting response that follows from the belief that whatever you do does not matter. Attributional style is the manner in which you habitually explain to yourself why events happen. Attributional style is the modulator of learned helplessness (Seligman, 1990). The learned helplessness theory has evolved from early animal experiments attributing the behavioral persistence decrements to the uncontrollability of the aversive event; through the reformulation hypothesis attributing the helplessness symptomology to the interpretation for the negative event by the subject; to the application of the learned helplessness theory to psychopathology and predicting cognitive deficits and performance decrements.

Students with LD and/or ADHD may experience more than their fair share of failure and set-backs in a postsecondary education. The nature of the disabilities is in direct conflict with the educational process. Students with LD and ADHD are likely to experience a non-contingency between response and outcome through repeated failures in spite of increased effort. Failures in this sense refers to not receiving a grade equivalent to the effort put into the subject. As with most disabling conditions, students with LD and ADHD must put forth more time and energy to achieve the same results as people who do not have educational obstacles. When students with LD and ADHD experience the non-contingency between effort and performance, motivational, cognitive and emotional decrements may follow.

Thirty-one (20 males and 11 females) postsecondary students with learning disabilities (LD) and/or with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) completed a combined Academic Attributional Style and Coping with Academic Failures Questionnaire. The reformulated learned helplessness model predicted that students with negative attributional styles (i.e., internal-stable-global attributions) experienced motivational, cognitive, and emotional deficits. The present study examined college achievement (grade point average) of students with LD and/or ADHD, predicting that students with negative attributional styles would achieve less academic success than students with positive attributional styles (i.e., external-unstable-specific attributions). Significant correlation was found between academic achievement and attribution style scores. Attributional style also predicted behavioral persistence measured by the Coping with Academic Failure Questionnaire.

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FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH BEHAVIOUR ADJUSTMENT IN CHILDREN WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

While literature has documented a high incidence of behaviour difficulties among children with learning disabilities (Cummings, Vallance & Brazil, 1992), not all children with learning disabilities experience these behaviour problems (Vaughn and Hogan, 1994). Factors associated with the presence or absence of adjustment difficulties were examined by Integra, a children's mental health centre in Toronto addressing the psychosocial aspects of learning disabilities. Integra provides therapeutic groups for children and adolescents with learning disabilities that stress the pragmatic, social use of language in the context of peer interactions. The effectiveness of this model is supported by findings of the present study.

Children with learning disabilities with and without behaviour problems were compared on measures of cognitive profile, self-esteem and verbal processing. Sixty-seven children (23 girls, 44 boys, age 8-12) identified as having a learning disability by their school board were divided into two groups: one group with documented behaviour problems and a second group without documented behaviour problems.

Criteria for the group with behaviour problems (n=29) included: 1) a statement in a psychological assessment identifying a behaviour problem; and 2) a rating one standard deviation above the mean on the Problem Behaviors Scale of the *Social Skills Rating System - Teacher Form* (SSRS) (Gresham & Elliot, 1990).

The group without behaviour problems (n=38) presented with a score of less than one standard deviation above the mean on the Problem Behaviors Scale of the SSRS and the absence of a statement in a school board psychological assessment identifying a behaviour problem.

A Multivariate Analysis of Variance revealed significant differences between the two groups. Dependent variables were Expressive and Interpretive Language scores from the *Test of Language Competence - Expanded Edition* (TLC-E) (Wiig and Secord, 1988), Verbal and Performance scores from the *Weschler Intelligence Scale for Children - Revised* (WISC-R) (Wechsler, 1974) and the Behaviour subscale from the *Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale* (Piers, 1984). Univariate results revealed significant effects for Interpretive Language and the Behaviour subscale of the *Piers-Harris Children's Self-Concept Scale* ($p < .05$).

Differences between the two experimental groups on the two TLC-E subscale scores subsumed within the Interpretive Language scale (figurative and recreational language) were examined with independent t-tests. Results revealed significant effects for figurative language only ($p < .05$).

Two important findings emerge from this study. First, 43% of a random sample of children with learning disabilities presented with significant behavioural problems. Second, these children presented with significant deficits in interpretive language when compared to their learning disabled peers without behaviour problems.

Findings suggest that social, behavioural and therapeutic interventions with children who have learning disabilities should focus on the interpretation of social language, particularly the use of metaphors.

The relationship between self-esteem measures and behaviour problems was an unexpected finding. Previous studies have indicated that children with learning disabilities maintain high perceptions of their own peer status despite low peer acceptance ratings (Vaughn, Haager, Hogan and Kouszekanani, 1992). Current results suggest that this inaccurate social judgement does not extend to the children's perception of their behaviour. Children with learning disabilities are able to make accurate judgements of their behaviour.

Limitations of the study include the assessment of behaviour difficulties in the school setting only. Future research should extend these findings by examining the correlates of behaviour problems at home, in the community and with peers in children with learning disabilities.

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THE NATURE AND EXTENT OF LEARNING DISABILITIES AMONG ABUSED MALES LIVING IN RESIDENTIAL TREATMENT FACILITIES

Abused children in the custody of Children's Protective Services (CPS) who are emotionally disturbed may be placed in a residential treatment facility for therapy. A battery of tests was administered to each resident on a yearly basis. A high percentage (87%) of these residents had learning disabilities. Data from the psychological evaluations of children at six residential treatment facilities were compiled to determine the nature and extent of learning disabilities in this population. Remedial materials were also tested with 20 residents.

The sample included 70 emotionally disturbed males living in six residential treatment facilities. This population included 37 African Americans, 21 Caucasians, 11 Hispanics and 1 Asian. Participants ranged in age from 9 to 16 years (M age = 14.4). Each participant received a battery of psychological, neuropsychological, personality, behavioral, and achievement tests. The administered tests included: Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children-III (WISC-III), Bender Gestalt (B-G), Benton Visual Retention Test (BVRT), Wide-Range Achievement Test-3 (WRAT-3), Gray Oral Reading Test-3 (GORT-3), Wide Range Assessment of Memory and Learning (WRAML), McCarron Assessment of Neuromuscular Development (MAND), Multidimensional Self Concept Scale (MSCS), Manifest Anxiety Scale, Incomplete Sentence Blank, and a behavioral rating.

The group's mean Wechsler-III Full Scale IQ was 98. The mean WISC-III IQ scales and subtest pattern are presented in Appendix A. The standard scores on all achievement and neuropsychological tests were significantly below intellectual potential and actual grade placement (Appendix B). The mean reading standard score on the WRAT-3 was 87 ($p < .00001$). The mean spelling score was 85 ($p < .00001$) and the mean arithmetic score for the group was 84 ($p < .00001$). The mean reading quotient on the Gray Oral Reading Test-3 was 78 ($p < .00001$). The mean standard score on the Bender Gestalt was 80 ($p < .00001$).

Ten boys with a significant deficit on the Gray Oral Reading Test-3 were selected to comprise the reading experimental or treatment group. These boys were selected on the basis of two criteria. Their oral reading quotient score on the Gray was significantly below their Full Scale IQ. Secondly, they were expected to remain at the treatment facility for at least 1 year, allowing for post testing at the time of their next scheduled psychological evaluation. There were boys who had significant deficits on their oral reading quotient scores, but were not expected to remain at the facility for a year. Therefore, they received no remediation. However, at the time of the next scheduled psychological evaluation, six of these boys were still at the facility, and these comprised the control group.

The 10 experimental reading participants received remediation utilizing the "Hooked On Phonics" reading program. Remedial sessions were provided twice a week for 6-9 months. Each remedial session included at least 4 repetitions of the phonics cards and tape, followed by the reading of 5-10 pages in the accompanying book. The average session took approximately 20-30 minutes.

Ten boys with a significant deficit on the Bender Gestalt Test were selected to comprise the visual-perceptual motor experimental or treatment group. Again, these boys were selected on the basis of two criteria: a Bender standard score significantly below their Full Scale IQ and the fact that they were expected to

remain at the treatment facility for at least a year allowing for post testing. At the time of the next scheduled psychological evaluation, there were six additional boys who had originally demonstrated a significant deficit on the Bender but had received no remediation. These six boys comprised the visual-perceptual motor control group. The 10 experimental participants received remedial sessions utilizing the Braud Visual-Perceptual Motor remediation program. Remedial sessions were provided twice a week for 6-9 months. At each session, the participant was asked to trace nine (9) transparencies which included 286 geometric designs, numbers, and cursive letters. The average tracing session took approximately 20 minutes.

Pretest and posttest dependent measures for experimental and control groups are presented in Appendix C. An independent *t* test was used to compare the pre-posttest difference scores of the experimental group with those of the control group. The experimental reading participants made statistically significant increases as compared to controls on their Gray Oral Reading Quotient scores ($p < .00001$), reading rate ($p < .0002$), reading accuracy ($p < .00001$), and reading comprehension ($p < .00001$) scores. The experimental visual-perceptual motor participants made statistically significant increases as compared to controls on their Bender Gestalt scores ($p < .00001$).

Several factors suggest that the learning disabilities (LD) in this population are similar to those found in other populations of LD children who are not abused and are, therefore, not merely associated with their emotional problems. First, the WISC-III subtest pattern (Appendix A) is similar to that found in other LD populations. The neuropsychological data also support this interpretation. The Neuromuscular Development Index (NDI) score of the MAND was used to compare several groups. Children with learning disabilities ($M = 77.33$) had significantly lower ($p < .0002$) NDI scores than children without learning disabilities ($M = 90.44$). In addition, children with a reading disability ($M = 75.83$) also exhibited significantly lower ($p < .008$) NDI scores that children without a reading disability ($M = 83.27$).

Seventy-seven percent of this population rated themselves as having attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADD/ADHD). In order to determine if this high percentage had a basis in fact, the ADD/ADHD group ($N = 54$) was compared to the subjects that did not consider themselves to have this disorder (N-ADD/ADHD) on a variety of measures (Appendix D). The Freedom From Distractibility Factor Score (WISC-III) of the ADD/ADHD group (85.89) was significantly below ($p < .0002$) that of the N-ADD/ADHD group (98.50). The General Memory Index score of the Wide Range Assessment Of Memory and Learning (WRAML) for the ADD/ADHD group (83.00) was significantly below ($p < .0007$) that of the N-ADD/ADHD (96.31). In addition, the ADD/ADHD group had a significantly lower verbal memory ($p < .003$) and visual memory ($p < .0007$). However, when material was presented to the child four consecutive times, the memory of the ADD/ADHD group improved ($M = 100.17$). This finding appeared important since this is the technique used in presentation of material in the "Hooked On Phonics" program. Of the ADD/ADHD sample, 63% were presently or had previously been prescribed Ritalin.

On other tests, the ADD/ADHD group performed significantly lower than the N-ADD/ADHD group. Each participant's reading comprehension grade level score (GORT-3) was compared to his actual grade level yielding a difference score. The ADD/ADHD group's score was significantly lower ($p < .009$). The mean neuromuscular ability score (NDI) of the ADD/ADHD group was also significantly lower ($p < .002$) than the corresponding score of the N-ADD/ADHD group.

The results of this study indicate that abused males in residential treatment have a variety of severe problems that include emotional, behavioral, and academic aspects. The prevalence of ADD/ADHD (77%) among abused males in residential facilities needs to be addressed as a factor in their treatment. The high percentage of children in this population with learning disabilities (87%) demonstrates the need for self paced remedial programs in such settings.

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The Results of Training County Social Services Employees in Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder: A Pilot Intervention Model with a Rural Eastern North Carolina Department of Social Services

The North Carolina Department of Social Services (DSS) agencies provide a myriad of services to troubled families with children. The case management of these families takes up a significant portion DSS employee's services and labor. As case managers, DSS employees assess for these families, formulate treatment plans, and implement family supervision models. Often, treatment plans include referrals for mental health evaluations and psychotherapy.

The DSS caseworker makes referrals to mental health because he or she is concerned with and/or has identified maladaptive symptoms of one or more family members. Examples of maladjustment or symptomology include family chaos, family disengagement, conduct problems, learning problems, psychosomatic problems, impulsiveness, hyperactivity, and anxiety (American Psychiatric Association, 1994).

It is the contention of my research that children with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), are over-represented within a typical DSS population. It is estimated that between 40 - 70% of all child clinical referrals to community mental health clinics are the result of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder or ADHD (Barkley, 1990). In addition, Wender (1995) approximates that 40% of all ADHD individuals retain symptomology into and throughout adulthood. As a result, the DSS caseworker may often work with large number of families with one or more family members affected with ADHD. An accurate knowledge of ADHD and appropriate intervention protocol are therefore essential for a DSS caseworker. Appropriate knowledge and intervention protocol (what works best for home, school, etc.) for ADHD allows the caseworker to effectively manage cases. Most important, this knowledge equips the caseworker with the ability to distinguish ADHD from more serious issues such as abuse and/or neglect.

The first way of effectively handling an ADHD population is for DSS investigators is to understand the multidimensional aspects of abuse and/or neglect

allegations and ADHD chronicity. The DSS investigator needs to understand the acting-out behaviors often associated with the ADHD child. A second way is to be able to distinguish these ADHD behaviors from those acting-out behaviors resulting from abuse and/or neglect. It is possible that in some agencies, families with ADHD children are processed as abusive or neglectful when in fact they are merely exhibiting classic ADHD family dynamics. The final and most important way is for the DSS investigator to be able to identify those situations where *both* ADHD and abuse and/or neglect are present.

In this manner, the DSS investigator is faced with looking at ADHD and abuse and/or neglect from a continuum basis. ADHD may be coupled with abuse and/or neglect. Assessment rarely involves a separate occurrence of either ADHD or abuse or neglect. It is not a simple either/or assessment. Co-morbidity increases the complexity of ADHD and abuse and/or neglect assessment. ADHD, like abuse and/or neglect, operates on a range from mild to moderate to severe in its symptoms. When a DSS investigator uses more distinguishing interview and intervention protocol, he or she is able to identify and assess ADHD symptoms. These are the beginning steps of effectively working with an ADHD population.

This study evaluated certain outcome variables of an ADHD educational intervention model for DSS personnel in Onslow County, North Carolina. The ADHD educational model targeted etiology, assessment, childhood and adolescent developmental milestones, individual and family dynamics, medications, common interventions, and family interventions. The final aspect of the model involved use of decision trees for the participating caseworkers. The hypothesis for this study was that knowledge outcomes resulting from the ADHD educational intervention would significantly increase in post-test measures for the experimental group over the control group. Attitudes and knowledge of 70 DSS personnel were measured in an Experimental-Control Group, Pre-Test, Post-Test Repeated Design. Post-test data were analyzed for significant differences in knowledge, attitude, and a greater use of assessment tools. In addition, a qualitative research design included a focus group design.

The results of this study indicated that both the experimental and control groups experienced a within-groups increase in ADHD knowledge resulting from the intervention. However, no significant differences existed between the two groups. Focus group data included changes in attitude with respect to acceptance of ADHD and the impact of ADHD on case management. Future research will include assessment of DSS agency outcomes measurement in terms of assessment and treatment protocol. Specific agency recommendations will be highlighted.

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Faculty Perceptions of Support Services for Students With Learning Disabilities

Faculty perceptions of learning disabilities and the academic accommodations that must be legally provided for the students vary among the faculty as well as their academic units. The results of a survey given to the faculty at a university in southern Illinois where a structured support program for students with learning disabilites has been in existence for 19 years is presented. Most faculty agree that students with learning disabilities are entitled to certain services. However, there are differences in what faculty perceive as reasonable accommodations and accommodations they feel are forced upon them by law. Several raised questions regarding issues of fairness to the student without learning disabilities and maintaining academic standards without compromising the integrity of the institution.

This survey was conducted in an effort to assess faculty knowledge, attitudes and behaviors towards students with learning disabilities and the services provided by an academic support program. It was perceived that stronger communications with departments would enhance the overall quality of services provided for the students and that faculty awareness of students specific needs would improve. Results of this survey confirmed this concept. The faculty overwhelmingly responded in favor of attending workshops designed to enhance their knowlege and clear up any misperceptions held about the role of the support program and the services provided. Furthermore, in the academic units where workshops were conducted, faculty responded favorably to the methods in which services are provided. Additionally, faculty expressed a clearer understanding of how students with learning disabilities compete academically at a university without compromising the academic standards or integrity of the institution.

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A SECOND LOOK AT LANGUAGE THERAPY FOR ADOLESCENTS

In 1993, a longitudinal study was completed by the first author. Pre- and post-test results of ten adolescent subjects who had been diagnosed with language-learning disabilities were analyzed to determine if progress was made following a two-to-four year period of language therapy. Results of the study indicated that adolescents do achieve significant gains in the development of thinking, reading, speaking, and listening skills when provided with appropriate therapeutic services. The results supported the belief that adolescents could make significant gains in language skill development. Improvement was observed for all subjects despite differences in time in the program, intellectual level, and age.

This current study examined the pre-and post-test results of an additional sixteen adolescent subjects to ascertain if these results would concur with the findings from the previous study. As before the study took place at a private, boarding school for adolescents, ages 12-21, with learning disabilities where the authors had been working as speech-language pathologists for several years. At this school, the speech-language program is an integral part of the holistic program designed to empower students with learning disabilities to recognize and optimize their full potential. Approximately 70% of the student body receive language therapy services.

Students identified as having speech-language problems receive from one-to-three 50-minute sessions of individual therapy per week and, if needed, one session of group therapy to foster development of social language skills. Individual therapy programs were developed to meet the specific needs of each of the subjects. Primarily, a multi-sensory approach was utilized during the therapy sessions.

Subjects in both the original study and the current study were initially given the Test of Adolescent Language-2 (TOAL-2). After a treatment period of one year and at the end of each academic year thereafter, students were again administered the TOAL-2. The test consists of eight subtests designed to measure

the language skills of adolescents by comparing their performance with that of their age-mates. The subtests measure grammar and vocabulary when the student listens, speaks, reads, and writes. Standard scores are given as measurements of performance. A standard score of 8 to 12 is considered to be within the average range.

In the current study, thirteen of the subjects received two years of treatment, two received three years of treatment, and one received four years of treatment. All the subjects demonstrated gains from the pre-test to the post-test. Some of the gains were significant.

Each subject's test results were analyzed to determine the gains made for each subtest. The difference in the pre- and post-test standard scores for each subtest was listed and then totaled to obtain an over-all gain for each person. The gains ranged from 35 to 6. All the subjects, except one, improved so that at least one of their subtest scores increased from below average to average. Twelve of the subjects' performances increased so that they scored in the average range on at least three of the subtests; whereas, prior to treatment only seven of the subjects had any of the subtest scores within the average range. At the end of the study, eight of the subjects were scoring within average limits on a least half of the subtests.

Analysis of the subtest data indicated that the greatest gains were in understanding and using grammar while reading and writing and in reading words and writing sentences with them. Students also made good gains in reading and spoken vocabulary and in listening grammar. The students experienced few gains in listening vocabulary which measured the student's knowledge of words with two meanings and in sentence memory.

The results from this study again indicate that adolescents who have language-learning disabilities benefit significantly from participation in language therapy. The data showed significant increases in reading and writing skills. As before, these gains did not appear to be related to treatment time, intellectual level, or age.

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A Qualitative Analysis of the Concept of Quality of Life as Viewed by Females with Learning Disabilities in a College Setting

The session will present the results of a qualitative investigation into the concept of quality of life as described by women with learning disabilities enrolled in a large university. The purpose of this study was to explore the concepts and constructs that young adult women with learning disabilities consider important to their life quality, as they attend a postsecondary institution and as they consider their future plans. I was especially interested in the students' perceptions of the interaction between their environment and their individual strengths and weaknesses in the areas of social relationships, educational attainment, career exploration, and personal fulfillment and how, if at all, these areas relate to perceived life quality. Three methods of data collection were used, including semi-structured interviews, observation, and document analysis. The semi-structured interviews were the primary means of data collection; I used open-ended questions related to broad topics designed to elicit information from the participants about their learning disability and the effect it has had on their lives. As the interview proceeded, the questions became more focused on issues related to quality of life and how the individuals' learning disability may or may not affect them in various areas.

Data analysis involved using a constant comparative method to identify themes and patterns that emerged from the interview transcriptions. Themes that emerged from the interviews were compared for similarities and resulted in four major categories. The interview transcriptions were consulted again in an attempt to account for all the incidents in the data and to search for new incidents that had been overlooked. Specific instances from the data were used to justify inclusion of categories and subcategories, with an awareness of the diversity of some of the subcategories under the major categories across both interviews. The research participants were consulted in follow-up

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sessions to clarify the relevance of themes the researcher had identified. The major categories were then arranged in a data display, with dimensions of the subcategories delineated under each major category in the study.

The results of this preliminary study suggested four major categories or themes that emerged with regard to the research question. The categories identified were as follows: Being Able to Fulfill Goals, Identifying Strategies to Deal with a Learning Disability, Learning to Deal with Feelings About Self in Relation to a Learning Disability, and Learning to Deal with Reactions from Others. Implications include the importance of research that allows participants and/or consumers to tell their own story in their own words and to have access to research results in order to present their interpretation of the data. In addition, several ideas were reiterated for the postsecondary population, including the importance of attending to the expectations of the environment and the social-emotional ramifications of living with a learning disability.

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THE LANGUAGE OF NEGOTIATION: COMPARING CHILDREN WITH LANGUAGE-BASED LEARNING DISABILITIES WITH NORMALLY ACHIEVING CHILDREN

Many children with learning disabilities evidence a number of difficulties developing functional uses of language necessary to communicate in situations where meaning discrepancies between the participants exist. Identifying the strategies which children with language-based learning disabilities use or fail to use in interactive situations is important in understanding the nature of their difficulties in social relationships and social learning situations. Given that many children with learning disabilities are served in inclusive settings using instructional formats like peer tutoring and collaborative learning, it is important to explore the ways in which the presence of language-based learning disabilities may impact the effectiveness thereof.

Twenty children with language-based learning disabilties and twenty normally achieving children were asked to complete a task in a dyadic situation in which the relevant information available to the two participants was discrepant. Sessions were tape recorded, transcribed and coded according to criteria reflecting functions employed to resolve discrepancies between the information given the two participants toward reaching the goal. The task was a map-routing task where the participants were asked to find a route on a map given somewhat different maps with discrepant reference points.

Portions of transcriptions and analysis are presented to show that the children with learning disabilities in the study use language in inefficient but predictable ways to attempt to negotiate the task with their partner.

Limitations of the study are presented as well as implications for the nature of social relationships among children with learning disabilities, strategies for fostering effectiveness of social learning situations, and possible interventions.

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Is "Learning Disabilities" Just a Fancy Term for "Underachievement"? A Review of the Literature

Twenty-one years the inclusion of "learning disability" as a disability category in the Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (P.L. 94-142), special education remains in a quandary over what constitutes a learning disability. Some special and general educators claim that learning disabled and low-achieving students are essentially the same students. To bolster their claim, these educators point to individual studies purporting to show that the two groups are virtually indistinguishable. Others take issue with this view. They admit that school performance of the two groups overlaps but claim that, on average, learning disabled and underachieving students are indeed distinguishable from each other--that they have different educational needs.

While this debate may strike some as "academic" or arcane, it has fundamental implications for policy and practice. At present, the alleged failure to reliably distinguish learning disabilities from low achievement is being used by some academics, advocates, and policymakers as evidence to support the elimination of the learning disability category in favor of a broader definition of low achievement.

Given that the proposed dismantling of the learning disabilities category would ultimately affect educational programming for millions of children in our nation's schools, it is important that we base our decisions on sound knowledge rather than opinion. Unfortunately, at this crucial juncture when IDEA is being considered for reauthorization, policy decisions may be made without such data. In response to the need for accurate data, we are conducting a meta-analysis of the extant literature examining the similarities and differences between learning disabled and low-achieving students to determine whether the two groups are in fact different from one another along a number of academic and social dimensions. Our goal is to provide the field with nothing less than a definitive statement about whether--and if

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so, how and to what extent--learning disabled (LD) pupils differ from their low-achieving (LA) peers.

To achieve this goal, we have conducted a comprehensive and exhaustive search of the published and unpublished literature yielding around 200 studies with LD vs. LA comparisons. Second, each individual study has been coded along various methodological and demographic dimensions, critiquing it for technical quality. At the present time, we are calculating individual effect sizes for learning disabled/low-achieving student comparisons and aggregating individual effect sizes along such dimensions as academic performance, achievement/performance discrepancies, social acceptance, and school behavior.

While not complete at the time of this writing, results within the domain of reading will be disseminated at the Learning Disabilities Association 1997 Conference. At that time, this meta-analysis will answer questions like:

- In terms of standard deviations, how much better (or worse) do low-achieving students perform in reading than students with learning disabilities?
- What magnitude of difference (if any) separates the groups in terms of phonological awareness, phonological recoding, word recognition, fluency, and comprehension?
- Are obtained between-group differences affected when students' intellect, grade level, race, or socio-economic level are accounted for?
- Are the meta-analysis findings different when we analyze results from school identified vs. researcher identified samples of LD and LA students separately?
- What impact does the definition employed in the classification of students as LD have on the magnitude of difference (if any) between the two learner types?
- What impact does the quality of individual studies have on the magnitude of difference (if any) between LD and LA students?

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The Ability of College Students to Effectively Communicate the Specific Nature of Their Own Learning Disability

Students, identified as learning disabled, consulting college Learning Disabilities Specialists at a large western state university on two consecutive school days were asked to write a response to the question, "What Is Your Learning Disability?". Thirty-three students responded. After each student's name was replaced with a code number, the summary of the professional diagnosis of learning disability was added to their self description.. A Five Point Rating Scale was developed to rate the agreement of the student's description with that of the professional. Five authorities in the field of learning disabilities were asked to use the rating scale to determine how well the descriptions agreed.

When the scores of the five raters were averaged for each of the students involved in the study, results showed that only one-third of the students were able to describe their own learning disability so that it would satisfactorily agree with the summary of their professional diagnosis.

When analyzed separately, the students and the professionals used similar vocabulary: Out of 33 sets of responses, 15 used only processing vocabulary (i.e. perception, memory) to describe their learning disability, 2 used only achievement vocabulary (i.e. reading, writing), and 16 used both.

The five authorities' scores were then averaged for each student and the ten students whose descriptions most closely resembled that of their professional diagnosis (range 3.4 to 4.6) were designated as the "high agreement group". The ten students whose descriptions were furthest from their professional diagnosis (range 1 to 2.2) were designated as the "low agreement group".

When the high agreement group was compared to the low agreement group using t-tests, only the variable of grade point average was found to be significant ($p = .025$). The other variables of age, months since evaluation, Wechlser Adult Intelligence Scale-Revised (Verbal IQ, Performance IQ, Full Scale IQ), and Cohen Factors (Verbal Comprehension, Perceptual Organization, Freedom From Distractibility) were not significantly associated with the agreement ratings. The fact that grade point average was positively associated with agreement ratings seems to indicate that academically high achieving students who learn the material for their class tests also learn the summary of their diagnosis.

Although the numbers are too small to be meaningful, it appeared that high school IEP as a basis for verification of learning disability presented the most difficulty for students when attempting to repeat and/or interpret the specifics of diagnosis.

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GROUP THERAPY FOR ADOLESCENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS: A QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

This poster session presents the findings of a qualitative study which obtained the perspectives of adolescents with learning disabilities who participated in group therapy. The purpose of the study was to identify and describe the therapeutic factors as they were experienced, by the group members.

The literature suggests that children and adolescents with learning disabilities are at risk to experience psychosocial difficulties. The possible benefits of group therapy for adolescents are outlined in the literature (Scheidlinger & Aronson, 1991). Meta-analyses of treatment outcome research provides evidence that psychotherapy, including group therapy, is beneficial for children, adolescents and adults (Weisz, Weiss, Han, Granger, & Morton, 1995). Some literature suggests that group therapy can benefit adolescents with learning disabilities (Mishna, 1996a, 1996b; Pickar, 1988).

The groups took place in a social service agency serving children and adolescents with learning disabilities. Clients receive various services including individual, family and group therapy. The model presented is described as interpersonal group therapy. Additional techniques are used by the group leaders to accommodate the adolescents' learning disabilities.

The groups in the study ran for 17 weekly sessions, one and a half hours long. One group consisted of six boys, co-led by a female and a male; the second group consisted of eight girls, co-led by two females. As reported by the participants and their families, group members had experienced chronic social difficulties, had been rejected or ignored by peers, and suffered from low self-esteem.

Due to the scarce group therapy literature on adolescents with learning disabilities, a foundation was sought by obtaining the participants' perspectives on their group experience. A qualitative research design was therefore utilized. Four male and four female adolescents, who met criteria for learning disabilities, were interviewed upon completion of group therapy.

Data analysis was based upon grounded theory. The goal was to systematically develop categories about the participants' experiences, and to reduce these categories to overriding themes.

Two important trends emerged. First, the therapeutic elements identified are associated with established group theory and curative factors. The categories uncovered encompass curative factors that are comparable to those delineated by others. These are safety and trust, connection, and group process. Second, analysis identified a unique phenomenon, *mutual recognition*, which subsumes the identified therapeutic factors. *Mutual recognition* addressed central issues typically experienced by adolescents with learning disabilities.

In addition to describing the important therapeutic factors, systematic analysis of the narratives rendered a description of the ways in which the therapeutic factors were operative within the group process. The intrinsically relational manner in which the therapeutic factors were operative was labelled *mutual recognition*. *Mutual recognition* is described as a participant recognizing him/herself in others, at the same time recognizing that the others could see themselves in the participant.

The uncovering of *mutual recognition* was notable, as through this dimension of relatedness, participants felt they benefited from group therapy in domains in which adolescents with learning disabilities typically have difficulty. That is, from the participants' perspectives, group therapy enhanced their self esteem, sense of competence, awareness and understanding of self and others, and their ability to relate to peers.

Given the sample size, the results must be viewed as tentative and cannot be generalized to other adolescents with learning disabilities.

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An Intervention That Has Achieved Success.
Southern Illinois University's Achieve Program's Developmental Writing Class Leads to Success in the College Composition Class

After 10 years of staffing students into Achieve's Developmental Writing Class, the diagnostic profile of these students shows differences from students who were not recommended for writing class and were allowed to take Southern Illinois University's (SIU) first composition class, English 101. However, after taking Achieve's Writing Class and then taking English 101 the following semester, the grades are very similar when comparing those having had the Writing Class with those who did not. The data supports the concept that the intervention of Achieve's Writing Class has assisted the accomplishment of these students in attaining grades in English 101 at a level similar to their Achieve peers who did not have Achieve's Writing Class.

English 101 and English 102 are required courses for all students attending SIU. It is important for all Southern Illinois University students to have a grade of "C" or better in English 101 before English 102 can be taken. Therefore, these English classes are a critical component of every student's course of study. Previous to the creation of Achieve's Developmental Writing Class, many Achieve students were not successful in attaining a grade of "C" or better in English composition. It was this situation that prompted Achieve to initiate a writing class that would prepare students for the writing assignments in English 101.

Each student entering the Achieve Program, undergoes two days of diagnostic testing at Achieve. Each student is staffed and recommendations are made as to the services that will be provided by Achieve. Selected diagnostic test scores that are used in Achieve's staffing to determine a student's placement in Writing Class were used to compare the diagnostic profile of those students selected for the Developmental Writing Class with those who were allowed to take English 101 upon entering SIU. Then the grades attained in English 101 by both groups were compared.

The results of this analysis indicate that on average, those selected for Achieve's Developmental Writing Class revealed standard scores on the selected diagnostic battery that were lower than those Achieve students not selected for the Writing Class. However, there is little significant difference in the grades attained by both groups in English 101.

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Perspectives on Inclusion: A Comparison of Teachers and Parents

Two surveys were conducted of 255 teachers (132 general, 91, special, 32 other school personnel) and 264 parents (103 general, 151 special). Quantitative and qualitative analyses were conducted to determine their attitudes about inclusion. In general, parents were pleased with their children being in inclusive environments, but felt that the severity of the disability should be considered when making such a placement decision. Parents also expressed concerns about inadequate support and insufficient teacher education. The reason most often given for their favorable attitudes towards inclusion was the positive social aspects for their children.

General education teachers reported that they were less knowledgeable about special education law, less skillful in working with students with disabilities, and made fewer teaching and testing accommodations than did the special educators. They also felt that they did not receive enough institutional support.

In general, while parents and more special than general educators supported inclusion they expressed the same concerns; inadequate support and insufficient teacher training in meeting the student's individual needs.

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PREPARING MORE EFFECTIVE SPECIAL EDUCATION LEADERSHIP PERSONNEL

The special education supervisor's role is not only comprehensive and varied, but may change in response to legal mandates and the particular era of educational thought and practice in which one is found. With the current emphasis on inclusive education and collaboration between special education and general education in the provision of services to students with special needs, it seemed a particularly appropriate time to reanalyze and attempt to clarify the role of the special education supervisor/administrator.

The major purpose of this undertaking was to determine the rank order of competency statements related to the role of a special education supervisor/administrator as perceived by educational personnel. This information is not only useful to educational practitioners, but to those individuals involved in the personnel preparation of special education leadership.

The samples, comprised of Ohio special education supervisors, special education teachers, and general education principals were sent a questionnaire of competencies to assess their importance to the role of a special education supervisor. The mean rating scores of the individual competencies were rank ordered. The ranking information allowed for the determination of which of these competencies were perceived to be the most important.

The findings of the research strongly suggest the importance of the role of the special education leader in regard to legal requirements and issues as they relate to special education and service delivery systems. The data also suggest that the supervisor/administrator needs to be actively involved with the families of individuals with special needs and supportive community resources. Examples of additional areas which were of a high priority to special education leadership personnel

related to the provision of inservice to pertinent educational personnel, evaluation of specialized services, development and implementation of appropriate policies, and promotion of special education and general education collaboration.

This information has the potential to not only impact the practical implementation of special education supervision, but educational training programs at the preservice and inservice levels. If the special education supervisors are to be effective, institutions of higher education need to provide them with appropriate instruction and practical experiences which will prepare them in the competency areas identified as important in this study. Collaborative personnel preparation programs for special education and general education leadership personnel should be considered. This program should concentrate on certain key issues, such as the awareness of legal mandates and issues, development of consultative skills with various audiences, and specialized strategies and teaching techniques to be used by both special and general educators.

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Facilitating Inclusion Through Home, Community, and School Collaboration: The MDTP Model

The Multidisciplinary Diagnostic and Training Program (MDTP) at the University of Florida was established in 1981 by the Florida State Legislature. This was a collaborative effort between the Departments of Education and Medicine. The purpose of this center was to facilitate collaboration between the university, community, school, and families to provide diagnostic and intervention strategies to children with diverse medical, behavioral and educational needs. Specialized university centers are now located at the Universities of Florida, Florida State, North Florida, Miami, and South Florida. Each of these programs have developed unique programs responsive to the needs of the community.

The University of Florida MDTP works in partnership with the school districts and families of North Central Florida to provide comprehensive evaluation services to kindergarten through fifth grade children. These services are provided by the Multidisciplinary Diagnostic Team, the Educational Diagnostic Clinic, consultative liaison team, and a School-based Collaboration Project. MDTP provides support to teachers through workshops and inservice training programs, while also providing students, interns and medical residents in the Colleges of Education, Medicine, and Liberal Arts, practicum placement sites. MDTP actively participates in intervention research in schools and in the diagnostic classroom.

Parents, physicians, school counselors, educators, or other professionals may initiate a referral to MDTP. Each of the 14 school districts having an agreement with MDTP, have set their internal referral procedures for determining referral priorities. An MDTP liaison consultant coordinates the services between the school, community

agencies, families, and MDTP. The Multidisciplinary Evaluation Team is composed of professions from the fields of pediatric neurology, speech and language pathology, education, and school psychology. Each child referred to MDTP receives a quality, comprehensive evaluation through the Diagnostic Clinic at the University of Florida Health Center and College of Education. The results of the evaluation are shared with school district personnel and interventions and strategies are devised as a result of this discussion. The consultant liaisons coordinate the implementation of the these interventions. Some students are referred to the Diagnostic and Training Classroom where various instructional and behavior management methods are implemented and effectiveness data is collected. School personnel and parents meet with the teachers and MDTP staff to observe the child in the learning environment.

MDTP has initiated a School-based Collaboration Project to work with school personnel to identify areas of need, collaborative strategies, and interventions which may be effective in maintaining children in the regular education program. Parents and teachers receive ongoing support from the MDTP liaison consultant. The liaison works with the parent and teacher to design educational and behavioral intervention programs, as well as home-school contracts between the parents and the child's referring classroom teacher.

MDTP participates in field research with local schools and other university personnel. Language-based instruction, computerized curriculum based assessment, and computer assistive technology have been the subject of recent monographs produced by MDTP.

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GETTING BACK ON TRACK:
An Effective Tutorial System for Reinforcing Phonics Skills

This poster session will provide information about the effectiveness of the Trackmaster supplemental phonics program developed by the presenters and utilized in an after-school tutoring program in Manatee County, Florida. The Trackmaster system is designed in graduating stages of proficiency. The lessons are presented in a highly structured, direct instruction style. Developed to supplement other approaches in a variety of settings, Trackmaster specifically correlates to the majority of direct instruction reading programs.

The activities target problem areas at three decoding levels using a manipulative format. Trackmaster I provides reinforcement in basic sound blending skills while increasing the level of blending processing speed. Trackmaster II furnishes additional instruction in long and short vowel discrimination in order to teach automatic recognition and application of basic vowel rules. Trackmaster III focuses on the six essential vowel digraph teams typically introduced at the primer level.

Trackmaster III was successfully utilized in an elementary school where high school honor students provided instruction to intermediate level at-risk students. The sessions lasted approximately one hour, twice a week and ran for a ten week period. The tutors administered pretests, posttests and weekly word fluency timings. Results of this data compiled from the forty students completing all ten weeks of instruction will be provided, and will include information confirming that at least 75% of the students using Trackmaster showed a significant increase in phonics skills as well as accelerated word fluency. Further data currently being collected involving parents as tutors and use in the classroom will also be displayed.

The co-authors of this phonics program will demonstrate the use of the manipulative format of the Trackmaster system at each level. Each kit is stored in a three-ring binder and contains three types of supplemental materials. Motivational components include a self-recording progress tracker, posters and award certificates. Multisensory practice is provided through the manipulation of letters, laminated wipe-off cards and student generated word collections. The evaluation component consists of pre and post tests, student record and summary of progress, word lists and an acceleration rate graph. Instruction in the administration of this program and its components will be provided. Samples of this product will be available to interested individuals.

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Great Leaps in Reading Fluency

Statement of the Problem

One of the most tragic academic difficulties experienced by students in schools today is the inability to read and therefore benefit from the printed word. Fluency in reading is positively correlated to reading comprehension and general reading proficiency (Tindal & Marston, 1990). Efforts to increase reading fluency can enhance the reading skills of readers at risk for academic failure. This presentation describes a program where students with learning disabilities and students at risk of academic failure received individual instruction to increase reading fluency. A description of the reading program and results of the intervention are presented.

Procedures

One hundred students considered to be at risk for reading failure in grades 2 through 8 received the fluency instruction. These students were identified by their teachers as having problems in reading. Some of the students had been identified with a learning disability; other students were considered to be at risk for reading failure.

Lessons consisted of repeated readings of phonics, phrases, and high interest literature. The lesson materials were presented in order from easiest to most difficult. Students moved to more difficult levels by demonstrating proficiency (a goal of a certain number of words read in one minute) at each level. University students and teacher assistants recorded fluency data on charts.

Results

Data from the sessions showed average gains of 12 words per minute. Students also experienced gains in fluency as they approached new material. For example, a student's first reading of more difficult material was at the same or higher rate than her first reading of less difficult material. Teachers and other staff members at the elementary and middle schools reported increased confidence in the oral reading of the students who participated in the program; some students who had never before volunteered to read in class were much more inclined to read for classmates as the intervention progressed.

Relevant implications

Research on methods to increase reading fluency is critical to the development of comprehensive curriculums for students with learning disabilities and students at risk for academic failure. This program provides teachers with an efficient means to increase reading proficiency. In addition, the approach described in this poster session is one that can be easily adapted for parents and paraprofessionals to use, thus making the approach available to more students.

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Professional Development Schools: A Multidimensional Model for Preservice Teachers at Chicago State University

ABSTRACT

Chicago State University, in conjunction with personnel from Chicago Public Schools, has implemented a professional development school pilot project which incorporates a number of the characteristics typically associated with professional development schools, yet which is different in several fundamental ways. This project attempts to reach preservice teachers at the embryonic stage of their growth and awareness about the teaching profession. Project implementation occurs within the framework of required university course work and is facilitated through the team efforts of Chicago Public School master teachers, administrators, students, parents, and university personnel, who jointly plan and deliver preservice courses and seminars, and supervise structured field based learning experiences.

Through their exposure to the project, preservice teachers begin to shape a paradigm of what it means to be a teacher in a large, urban, school setting characterized by rich diversity yet plagued by economic and social issues that often interfere with effective educational practice. By the end of their semester-long experience, these teacher candidates begin to develop answers to questions regarding some of the tough issues that surface in practice but which are seldom addressed in the theory taught in most universities. As a result of their interactions with administrators, expert teachers, parents, and high school students, preservice teacher candidates come to understand that some of the issues facing urban public schools have no single, well-defined solutions.

Approximately 60 preservice teachers are enrolled concurrently in designated bi-clustered sections of C&I 152 (Introduction to Teaching) and Sp.Ed. 301 (Characteristics of Exceptional Children). These courses represent the first two in a sequence of requirements for teacher certification. Preservice teachers involved in the project participate in a range of field-based activities and theory-

based instructional experiences that have been developed collaboratively by a cadre of university and public-school stake holders. Each cadre consists of a public school administrator, a public school teacher with expertise in a number of critical areas, a parent, and a student. In addition, three university facilitators serve as advisors for the project. University professors are responsible for the overall planning and coordination of each course.

The notion of schools and universities working collaboratively to improve the quality of teaching and learning is not a new one. The CSU-CPS Project represents a way of strengthening the professional quality of teachers by enhancing the connection between theory and practice. The project targets preservice teachers at a stage in their development during which their paradigms about the profession are being shaped. By providing realistic perspectives about teaching practices, the project represents an attempt to lay a foundation on which preservice teachers can build. This approach to teacher preparation holds further promise for meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student population and for improving the quality of education overall in our complex society. From this standpoint, collaboration between public schools and universities may be central to any effort to improve education in this age of restructuring.

In order to be successful, the relationship between public schools and universities must be both symbiotic and synergistic. Public school educators need more interaction with those who conduct, synthesize, and disseminate education research; college of education faculty in teacher preparation programs have a wealth of such information to share with practitioners. In a similar vein, university personnel need input from public school practitioners directly involved in day-to-day instructional tasks and who are familiar with the dynamic needs of students; public school practitioners can bring a realistic view to the preparation of teachers in colleges of education. Such a level of interaction can be seen in the CSU-CPS Project.

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Homework and Students with Learning Disabilities: Research to Practice

This session presents results of a comprehensive review of the literature on homework, its outcomes, best practices for designing appropriate homework, and ways to encourage its completion in consideration of the unique needs of students with LD.

Abstract

Homework is an important activity for most American school-aged children, including those with special needs. Thus, homework concerns must be particularly critical for the 77% of all students with learning disabilities (LD) who receive academic instruction in general education classrooms.

Homework allows for increased academic engaged time and distributed practice, instructional procedures especially beneficial for students with special needs. However, literature in this area reveals that two conditions appear necessary for these benefits to be gained by students with special needs. If both are not present, student performance may be adversely affected, their grades negatively influenced, and a widened achievement gap between them and non-disabled peers may result.

The two conditions that must exist in order for homework to be beneficial include both teacher variables and student variables. Teachers must assign homework that involves content at an appropriate instructional level and provide positive consequences for its completion. Students must complete assignments at an acceptable rate and level of proficiency.

Unfortunately, these two conditions may not be present consistently. Teachers, may not assign appropriate tasks because they are uninformed about best practices for designing and assigning homework. Too, students frequently fail to complete assignments at acceptable rates and levels of proficiency because: (a) various non-homework activities (e.g., television, social functions) vie for out-of-school time, (b) developmental demands for independence come

into play as students mature and they may have difficulty mastering the organizational and self-control skills needed to complete assignments, and (c) characteristics often associated with students' disabilities may adversely impact the rate and quality of homework completion.

Specifically relative to homework performance, students with LD have been characterized as having more difficulty organizing themselves for homework and often not knowing what has been assigned and/or failing to take home appropriate materials. Other areas of difficulty include, allocating and maintaining attention to homework; correctly estimating time required to finish a task, especially long-term assignments; monitoring assignment completion, and continuing to work if a task seems too difficult. Combined, these characteristics depict students with LD as having difficulty on independent homework tasks that rely on attention to details and self-direction.

To overcome these characteristics, and ensure both conditions are present so that homework is a beneficial activity for students with LD, two actions must be taken: (a) Teachers must assign appropriate homework tasks, and (b) Students with LD need ways to overcome the challenges presented by their particular special needs. Several authors have addressed teacher and parent practices and a few have focused on student needs and activities. Interventions have included: self-management techniques, cooperative learning and/or effective instruction, and parental involvement.

The purpose of this presentation is to present in a systematic way results of a review and synthesis of the professional literature on homework with an emphasis on homework purposes, outcomes, and best practices. Recommendations for steps teachers, parents, and students can take to help students with LD reap the benefits of homework are presented.

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The Benefits of Using a Multisensory Approach to Teach Mathematics to Elementary School Students

The effects of using a multisensory approach to teaching mathematics to elementary school children in an urban setting were explored. Thirty-three children attending a summer recreational program at a community based program in an inner city setting were selected to participate in this study. Due to vacations and absenteeism, twenty-nine students remained in the study for the duration of the ten sessions. Students ranged from first through seventh grade. The tutoring was conducted on an individual basis for one hour a day for ten session. Graduate students provided the instruction under the supervision of a university professor.

Three strands of instruction were provided. The three strands included the following: 1) direct instruction in number fact acquisition using the Systematic Timed Delay Method; 2) representation of word problems using manipulatives; and 3) direct instruction in representing and solving algorithms. The Concrete-Representational-Abstract Sequence was used as the basis of instruction for word problems and algorithms.

Pretest and posttest measures included two subtests of the Woodcock-Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery: Revised: the calculation subtest and the applied problems subtest. An informal survey of basic facts was also administered. Not unexpectedly, minimal changes in standardized test scores were noted after the ten week intervention was conducted. However, qualitative changes in performance were noted for most students in further acquisition of number facts and in representation and correct solution of words problems and algorithms.

Manipulatives and math games were incorporated into instruction for students throughout the ten sessions. Mnemonic strategies were modeled as appropriate. The four basic operations were addressed as needed based upon analysis of the individual's pretest performance. Readiness concepts as well as fractions, money and real-world application were included in instructional objectives as appropriate.

Implications for future studies include the need for additional sessions in order to more accurately assess the effectiveness of the intervention and to allow time for maintenance and generalization of acquisition of number facts, algorithms, and representation of word problems.

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POWER: Improved Writing for Students with Learning Disabilities

This study investigated the implementation of the acronym POWER to students with learning disabilities (LD) to assist them in the writing process. In addition, a self-monitoring component was implemented to enable the students to take ownership of their own writing.

Adapting materials to meet the students needs is important in both instruction and motivation, specifically writing which is difficult for students with LD. The POWER plan for writing was implemented to improve the quantity and quality of writing. POWER stands for P=plan, O=organize, W=write, E=edit, and R=revise.

Subjects

Subjects in this study were 16 ninth grade students with LD from low/middle class families in a high school in a large urban midwestern city. Thirteen students were Caucasian, two were African American, and one was Hispanic. Ages ranged from 14-16 years old with a mean chronological age of 15 years, 4 months (SD= 12 months). The students were classified as LD according to the state requirements and guidelines.

Baseline Procedures

During baseline procedures students were given a different topic to write on every other day for 12 days. Topics were selected that had a direct relation, concern, and interest to the students. The topics were presented to the students at the beginning of class and they were encouraged to write as much as they could with no time limits or constraints. During the writing process students were allowed to do what they normally do for writing and they were not given suggestions on the writing process (i.e., spelling, punctuation, etc.). Students were also given a questionnaire about feelings toward writing and what they currently do when involved with the writing process.

Topics implemented included: (a) year round school, (b) dress codes in school, (c) design a school you would like to attend, (d) write about a favorite teacher you have had in school, (e) create a discipline plan for your school, and (f) how should the drug testing policy be used in schools?

Intervention Procedures

A week following the completion of the last baseline writing probe, the teacher taught the POWER plan for writing. Parallel to baseline procedures, topics were presented to students at the beginning of class.

First, the students were instructed about what POWER stood for, why it is important to apply, and how it is utilized. Second, students were instructed how to plan, organize, write, edit, and revise through teacher modeling. Third, the teacher used guided practice and the POWER plan with the students specifically developing a topic and written product using the strategy with a self-recording component, notably a three by five inch piece of paper with the acronym POWER written vertically on it. Students were instructed to check off each letter as each step was completed. Finally, the students were given a specific topic to write on and then implement the POWER plan independently.

The students were given the topic and encouraged to write as much as they could applying the POWER plan. Before the students began the teacher reviewed the acronym POWER and would discuss how it could be applied to their writing.

Results

Results showed significant differences for students with LD when comparing writing samples using POWER than without the strategy. The quantity of the written product improved with all the students increasing the number of words and sentences written. Moreover, the quality of the students' writing also improved from baseline writing samples. Student questionnaires indicated that they knew the steps of the POWER strategy and could specify additional classes in which POWER may be implemented to assist them in the writing process. In addition, students were more aware of planning and organizing before writing, and editing and revising after writing.

Discussion

Findings of this study support the results of current research in strategy instruction for students with LD, and suggest the POWER plan is effective in promoting writing for students with LD. The purpose of educators is to instruct students and to aid them in taking ownership for their ongoing learning, which includes working at becoming a better student and person. The same procedures and strategies are not effective for all students with LD, but this study demonstrated that through the use of the POWER plan students could improve the quantity and quality of their writing and be taught to monitor the entire writing process themselves.